



Justice Center

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

**IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH IN
CONNECTICUT
FOURTH PRESENTATION TO THE IOYOUTH TASK FORCE:
DISPOSITION, SUPERVISION, AND SERVICES**

MAY 13, 2020

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Goals and Context for this Presentation

- **Connecticut's juvenile justice system has changed in significant ways since July 2018**, including transfer of most system responsibilities to CSSD; closure of the CT Training School and inception of the REGIONS program; adoption of the PREDICT risk assessment tool; and new supervision and services practices implemented by CSSD.
- By necessity, **the data examined for this presentation covers the period before many of these changes were made** while focus groups and interviews were conducted while significant policy and practice changes were occurring.
- It often takes **substantial time to implement new policies and practices** with research fidelity, consistency, and high quality, let alone see the impact of such changes on system performance and youth outcomes.
- Given this context, the goal of this presentation is not to draw firm conclusions, but instead, to highlight key areas where there may be opportunities to **build upon, extend, and/or strengthen current reforms** as well as raise questions about whether there are **additional opportunities to align system policy/practice/funding implementation with research and best practices**.

Data provided by state agencies from FY2014-FY2018 informs the assessment findings presented today.

Data	Source
Court Support Services Division (CSSD): Probation Cases, Probation Conditions, JAG, BRAT, and Unified Criminal History, and Treatment Programs	
Department of Correction (DOC): Movements, Sentence, and Classification	Center for Analytics–University of New Haven
Department of Children and Families (DCF): Commitments, Placements, Risk Assessments	

Key data and analysis caveats to keep in mind are listed below.

- In FY2018, CSSD transitioned to a new risk assessment tool, PrediCT. This analysis covers the period from FY2014 to FY2018, and thus does not reflect the new risk assessment tool and associated practices established by CSSD.
- Service data analysis only includes CSSD contracted services—youth may have received services through non-contracted services.
- While the Connecticut Juvenile Training School school was closed in 2018 and responsibility for youth disposed to the deep end of the system was transferred to CSSD, this data is presented to help identify lessons learned that can inform the development of current/future secure/non-secure residential options.
- The treatment program analysis includes all supervision types except where supervision type is explicitly noted. Additionally, new CSSD treatment program data sources were available after FY2014. Some analysis of treatment program data is limited to FY2015 forward to limit the effect of different data collection practices.
- Analysis of judicial supervision is limited to delinquency cases.

CSG Justice Center staff conducted multiple site visits to Connecticut and spoke with over 100 stakeholders over the last 10 months.



CSG Justice Center staff also visited detention, REGIONS, and DOC facilities to meet with youth, facility leadership, custody staff, mental health providers, and education providers:

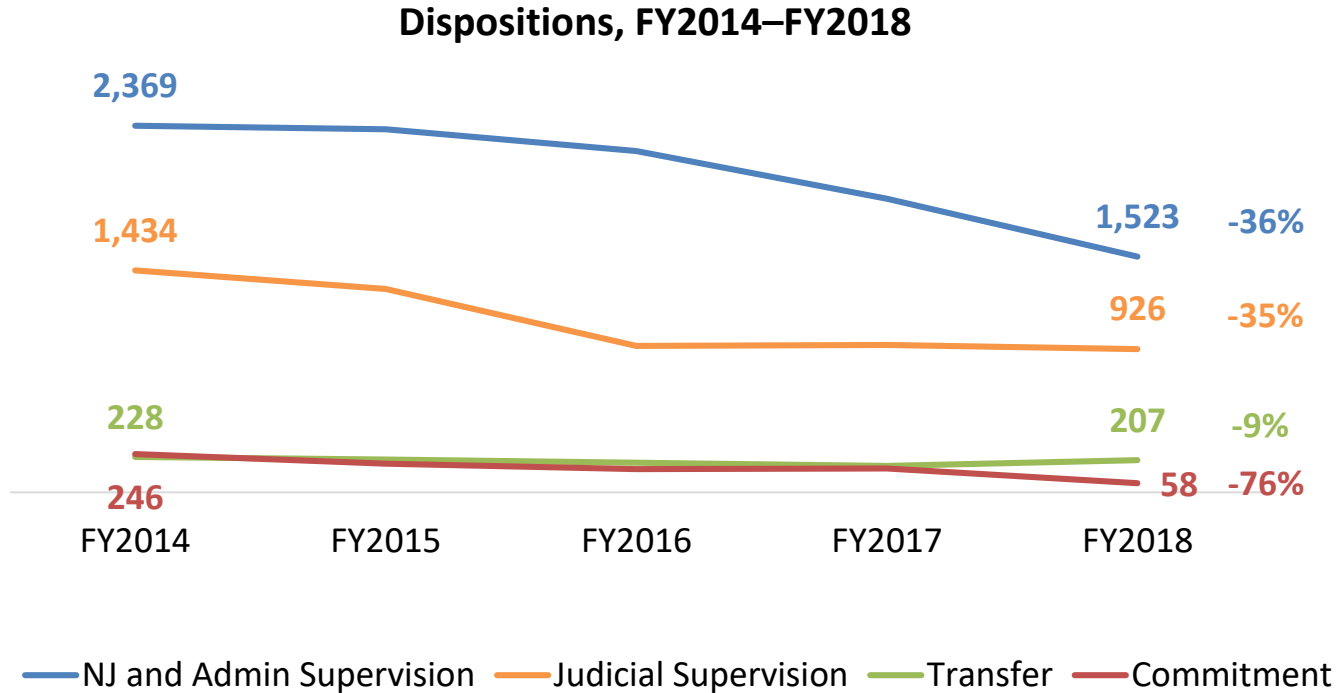
- Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Center
- Hartford Juvenile Detention Center
- Journey House
- Manson Youth Institution
- Boys and Girls Village
- Connecticut Junior Republic

Sites visits were held in July, September, and November 2019 and February 2020.

DISPOSITION ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

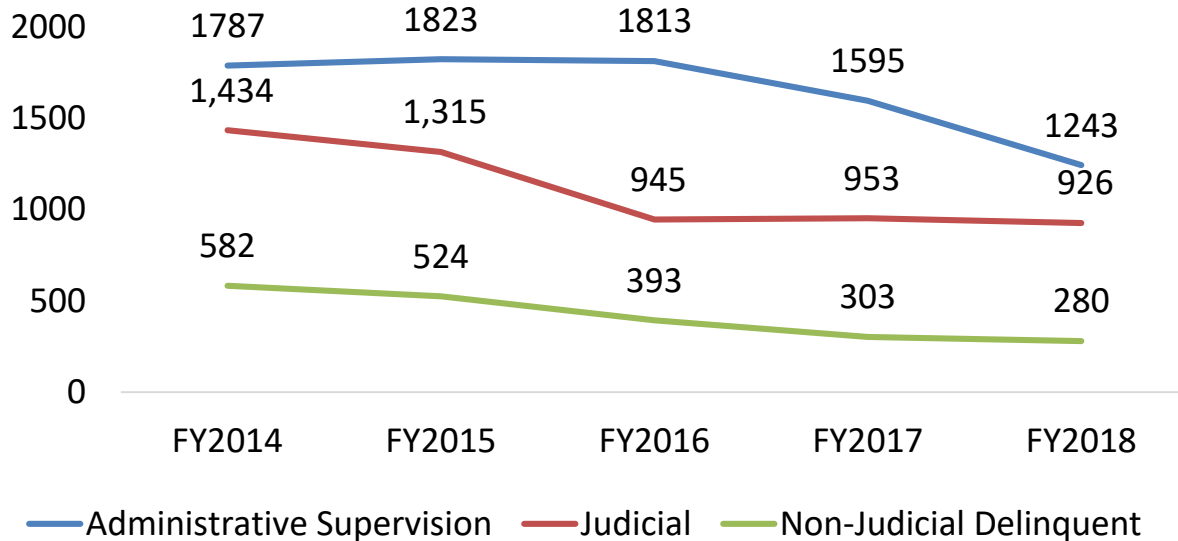
What dispositions do youth receive, and how are dispositional decisions made?

All disposition types declined between 2014 to 2018, though transfers have declined the least.



Dispositions to administrative and non-judicial delinquent supervision declined between 2014-2018, while dispositions to judicial supervision have remained flat since 2016.

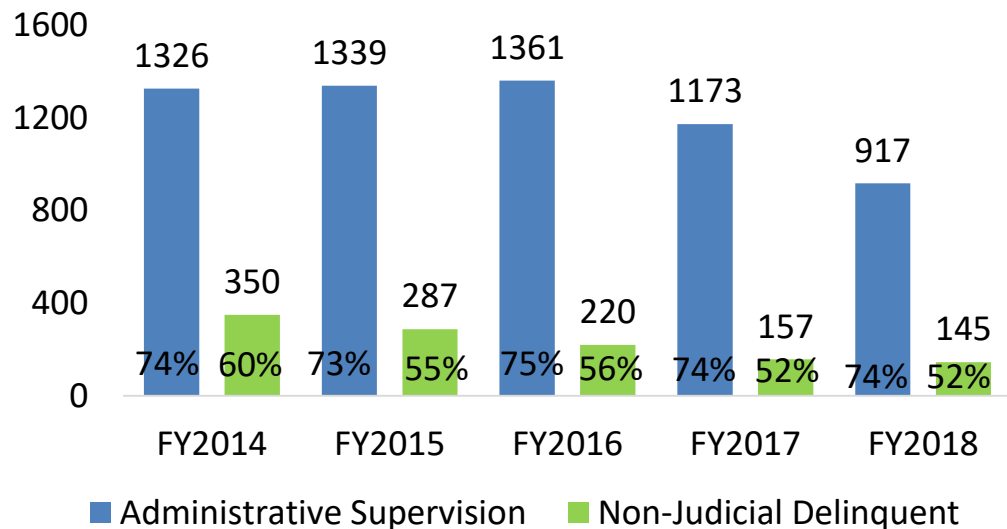
Supervision Dispositions, FY2014–FY2018



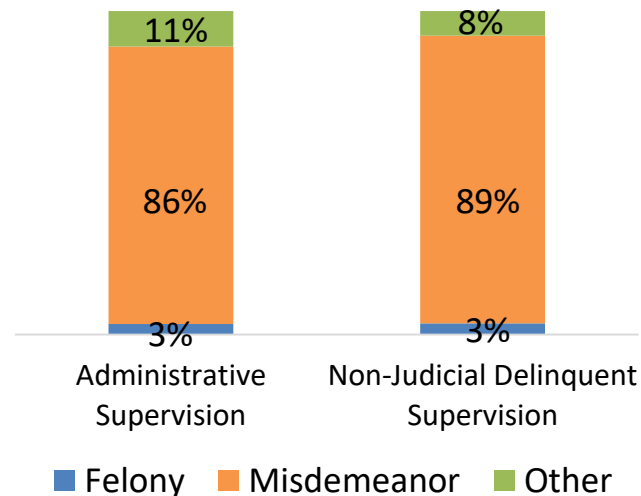
Dispositions to judicial supervision have not declined as much as other dispositions since 2016, potentially due to an uptick in the proportion of felony referrals, or the probation system absorbing youth who would have otherwise been committed to CJTS.

In 2018, 74 percent of dispositions to admin. supervision and over half to non-judicial supervision were for first-time referrals, and over 85 percent were for misdemeanors.

Non-Judicial Delinquent and Administrative Supervision Dispositions for First-Time Referrals, FY2014–FY2018

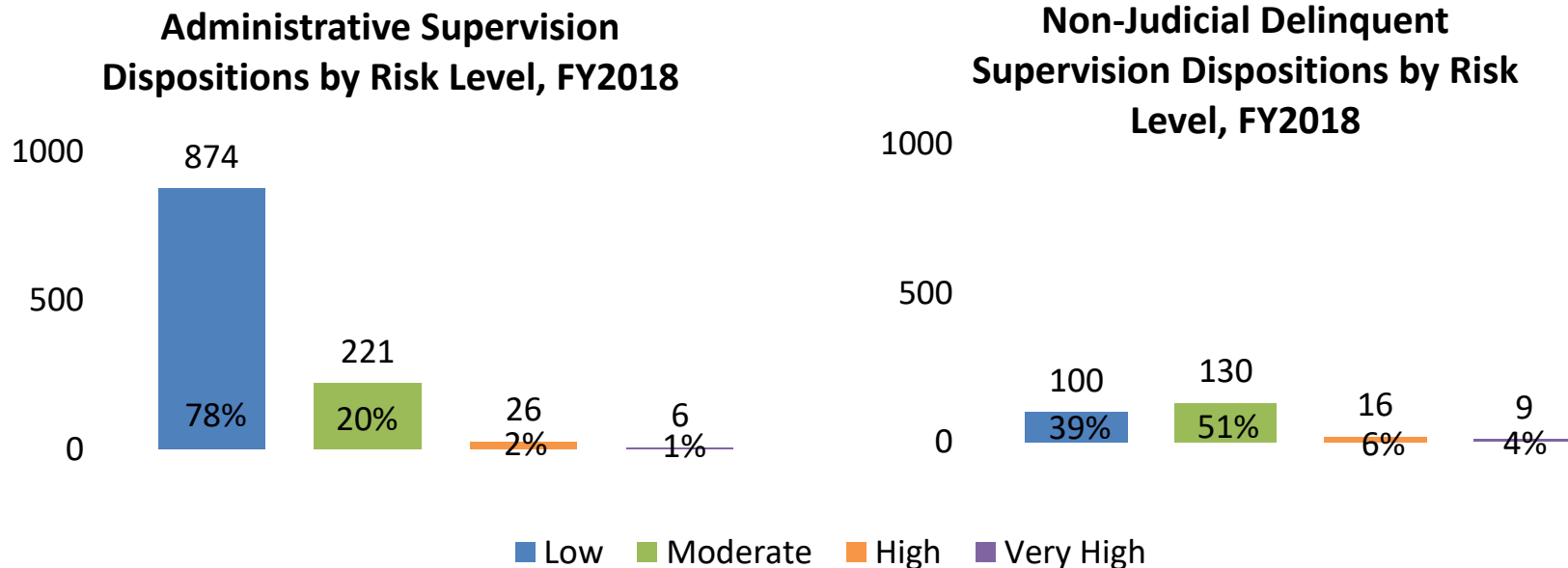


Non-Judicial Delinquent and Administrative Supervision Dispositions for First-Time Referrals by Offense Level, FY2018



Note: "Other" includes violations and infractions.

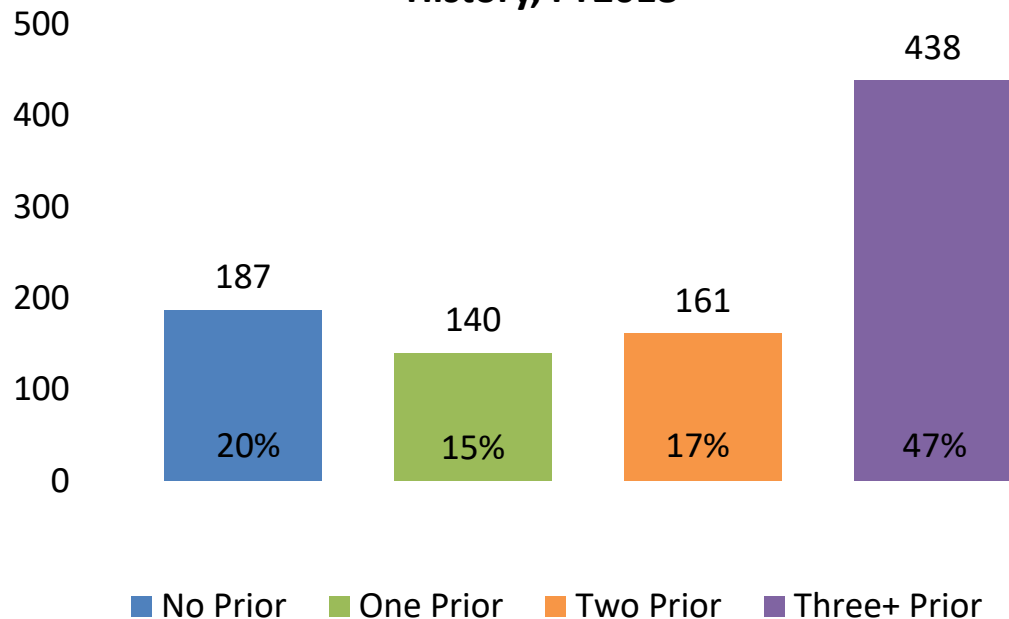
in 2018, almost three quarters of dispositions to admin. supervision and almost 40 percent for non-judicial supervision were for youth assessed as low risk.



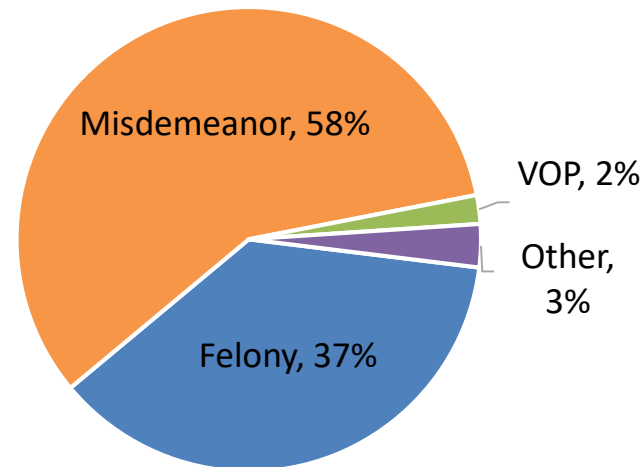
Note: No risk information was located for an additional 141 administrative and non-judicial delinquent supervision dispositions not included above, likely because the PREDICT was adopted in 2018 and many of these youth may have received a PREDICT instead.

In 2018, 20 percent of judicial supervision dispositions were youth with no prior offenses, and nearly 60 percent were for misdemeanor offenses.

Judicial Supervision Dispositions by Offense History, FY2018

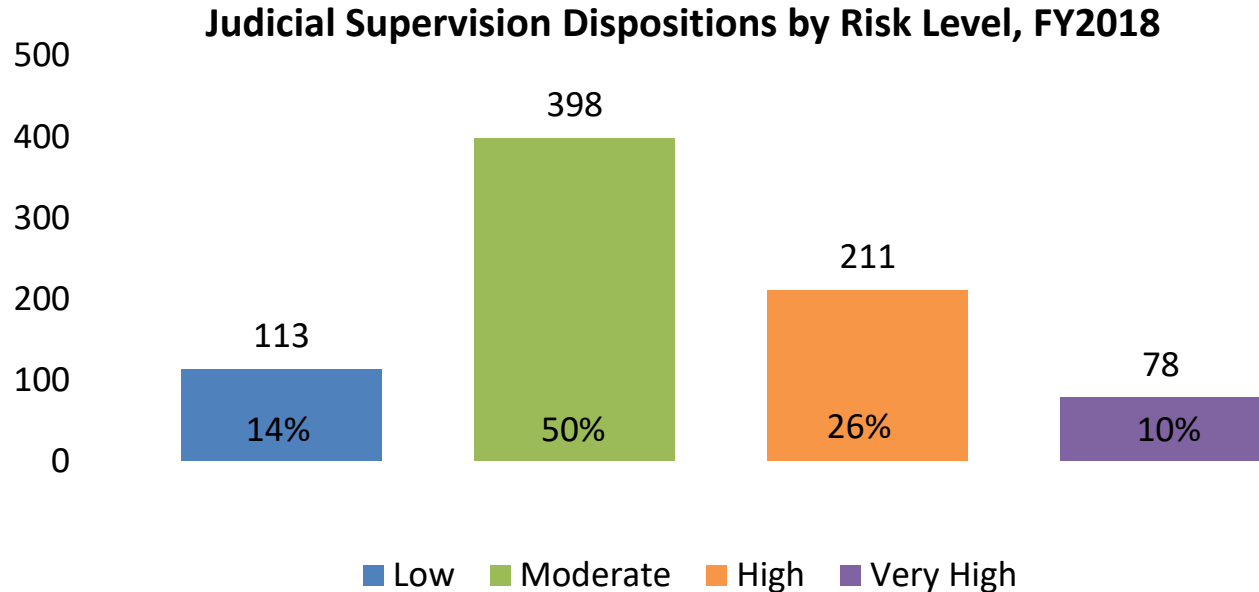


Judicial Supervision Dispositions by Offense Level, FY2018



Of felony dispositions to judicial supervision in FY2018, **80 percent were for a non-person offense.**

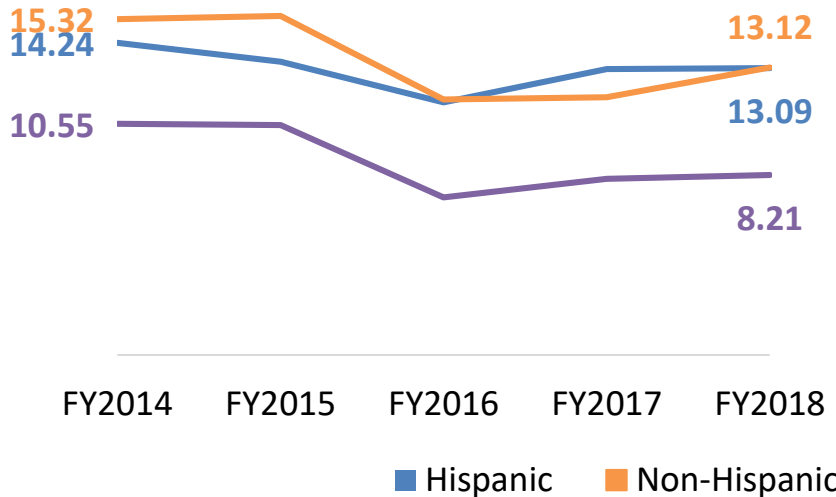
While most dispositions to judicial supervision are for youth assessed as moderate or high risk, 14 percent of youth in 2018 were assessed as low risk.



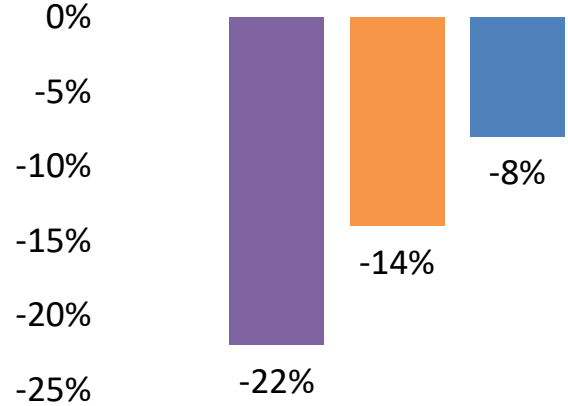
Note: No risk information was located for an additional 126 judicial supervision dispositions not included above, likely because the PREDICT was adopted in 2018 and many of these youth may have received a PREDICT instead.

Judicial supervision dispositions decreased for every race/ethnicity between 2014 and 2018, though they decreased the most for white youth.

Judicial Supervision Dispositions per 100 Referrals by Race/Ethnicity, FY2014–FY2018

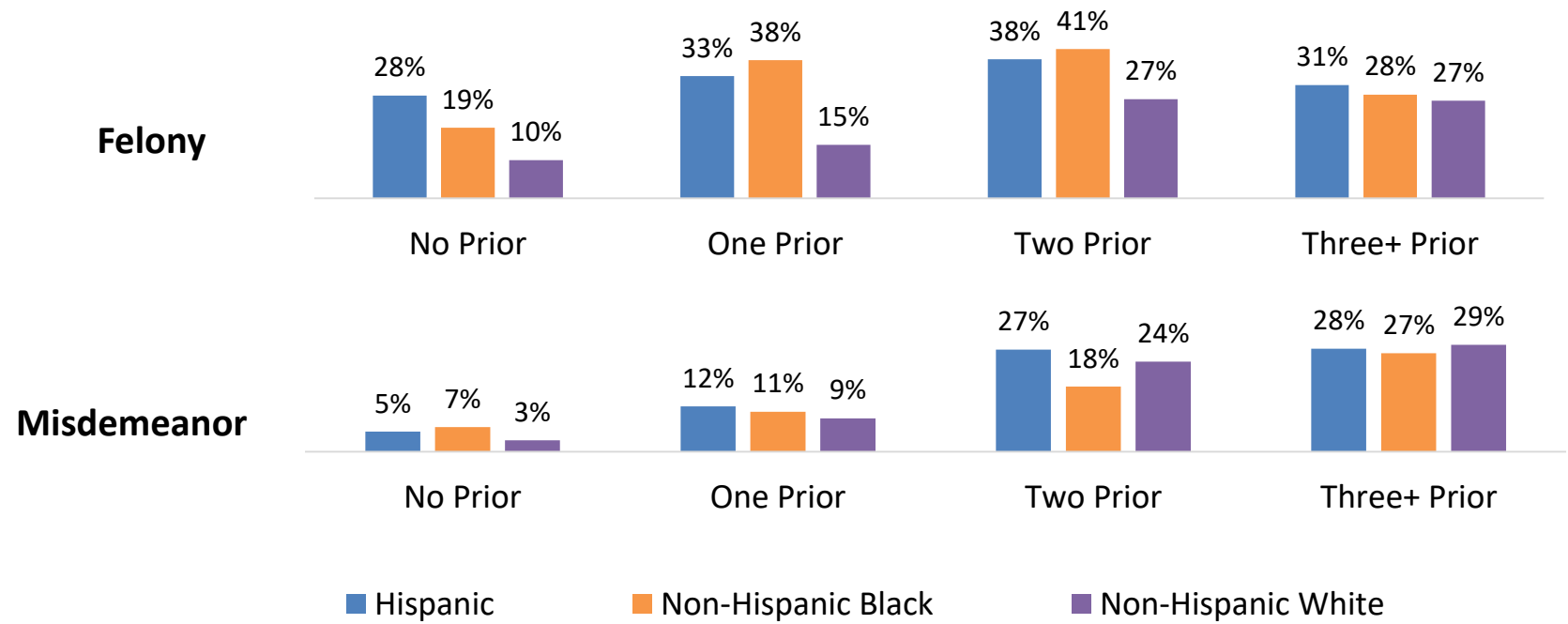


Percent Change in Disposition Rate per 100 Juvenile Court Referrals, FY2014–FY2018



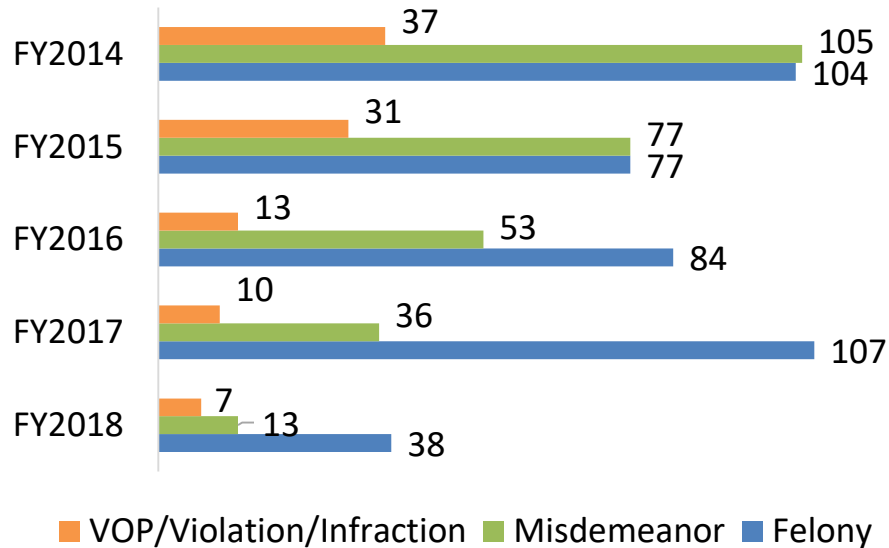
Youth of color with no or few prior referrals are more likely to receive judicial supervision than white youth, particularly for felony offenses.

Judicial Supervision Dispositions by Race/Ethnicity and Referral History, FY2018

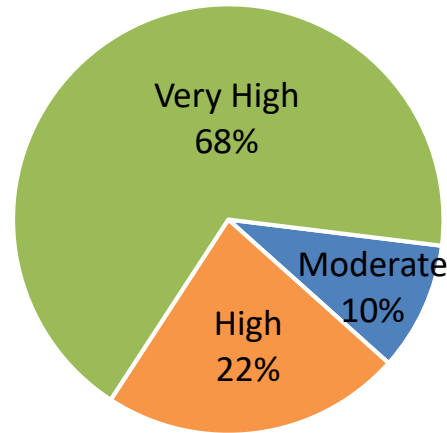


In 2018, nearly two-thirds of youth disposed to commitment had a felony offense, and the majority of youth were assessed as high or very high risk.

Commitment Dispositions by Offense Level, FY2014–FY2018



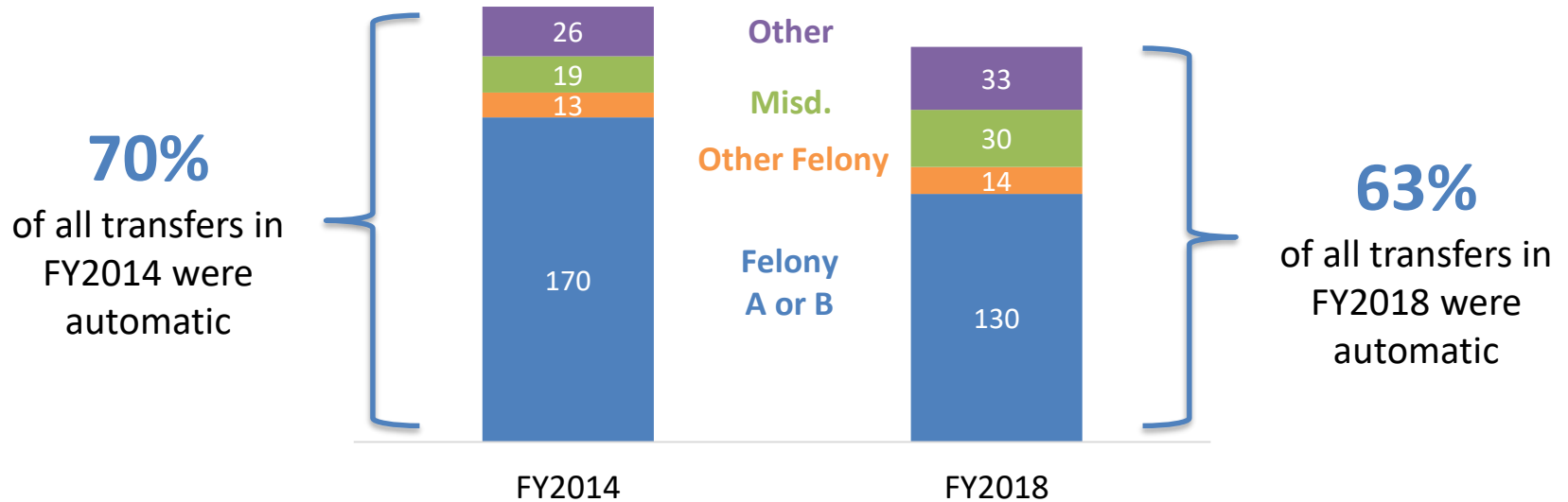
Commitment Dispositions by Risk Level, FY2018



93 percent of commitment dispositions in FY2018 were youth who had three or more prior referrals.

Most transfers are for youth that have committed a felony A or B offense, and nearly two-thirds of transfers in 2018 were automatic.

Transfers by Offense Type, FY2018



Note: Other includes VOP, violations, and infractions.

Disposition Key Takeaways

1 Disposition rates declined between 2014 and 2018 but have remained fairly steady between 2016-2018 for judicial supervision, and transfer rates declined the least.

2 Youth of color with no or few prior offenses are more likely to receive judicial supervision dispositions than white youth, particularly for committing a felony offense.

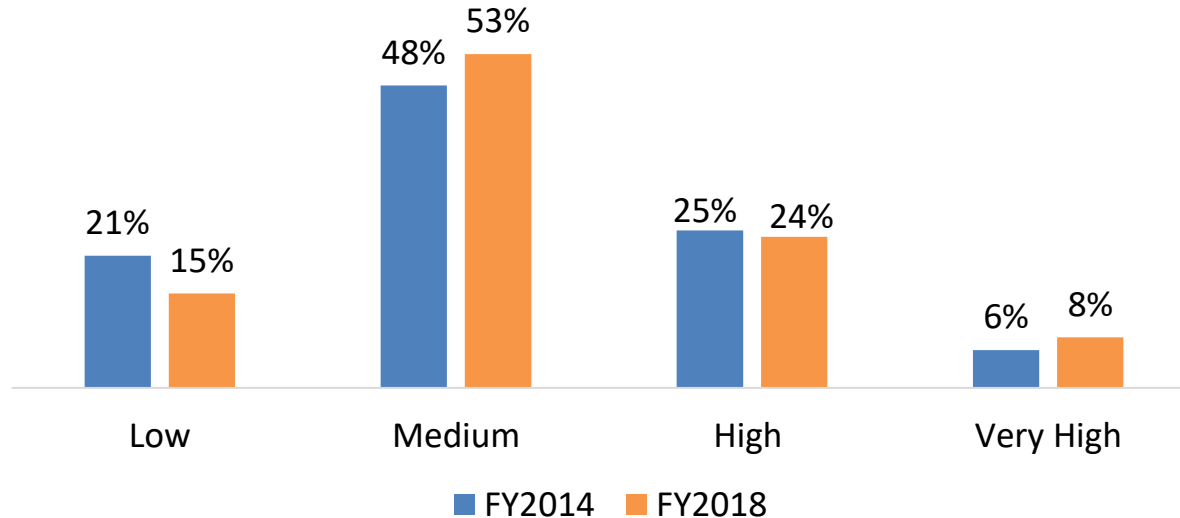
3 Opportunities may exist to divert additional lower-risk youth; youth of color; and youth who have committed first-time, nonviolent felony offenses from non-judicial and judicial supervision.

JUDICIAL SUPERVISION AND SERVICE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Who is receiving judicial supervision, what are their outcomes, what services are they receiving, and are these services effective?

Youth on judicial supervision are increasingly higher risk; in 2018, three-quarters of youth on judicial supervision were assessed as medium or high risk.

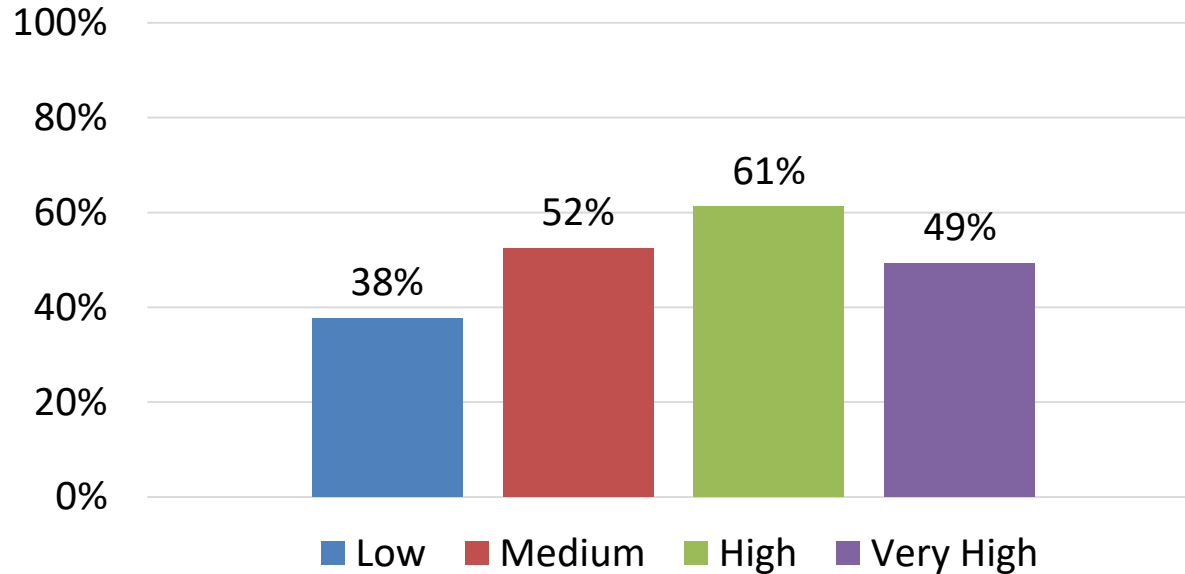
Judicial Supervision by Youth's Starting Risk Level, FY2014 and FY2018



Note: In FY2018, 148 cases had a PrediCT risk score; those cases are excluded from this analysis. In FY2014 and FY2018, 26 cases and 10 cases, respectively, were missing a case level and were excluded from the analysis.

Over half of medium-risk and over 60 percent of high risk youth on judicial supervision are rearrested; rearrest rates are also nearly 40 percent for low-risk youth.

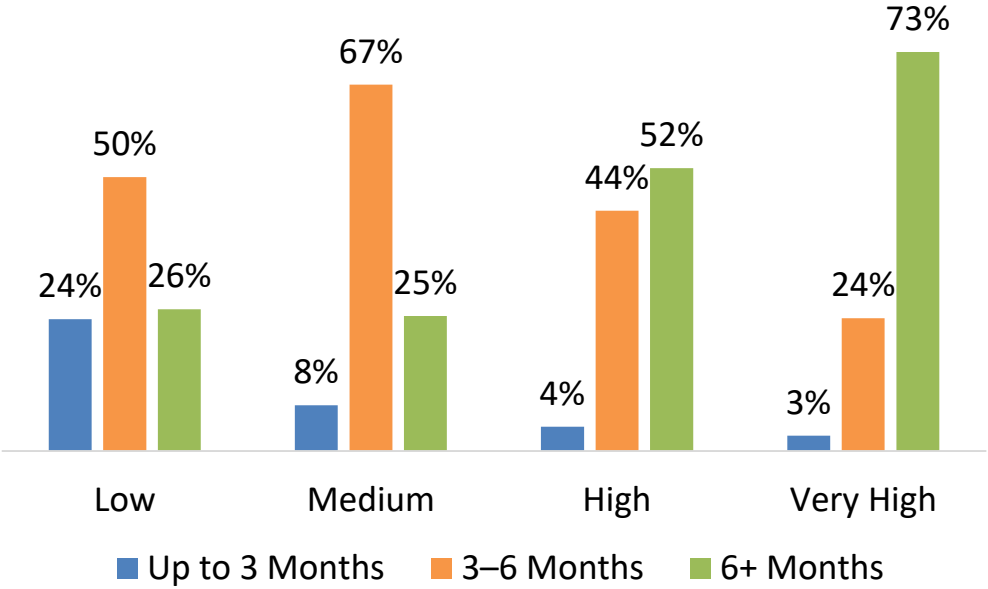
**Re-Arrest within One Year of Judicial Supervision Start by Risk Level,
FY2017**



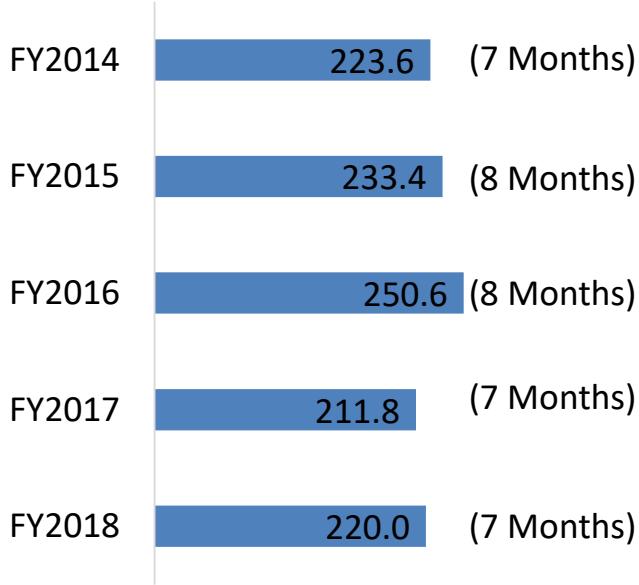
Note: Re-arrest includes misdemeanor and felony offenses only.

The average length of stay for youth on judicial supervision is seven months, with higher-risk youth having longer lengths of stay.

Length of Stay on Judicial Supervision by Risk Level, FY2018

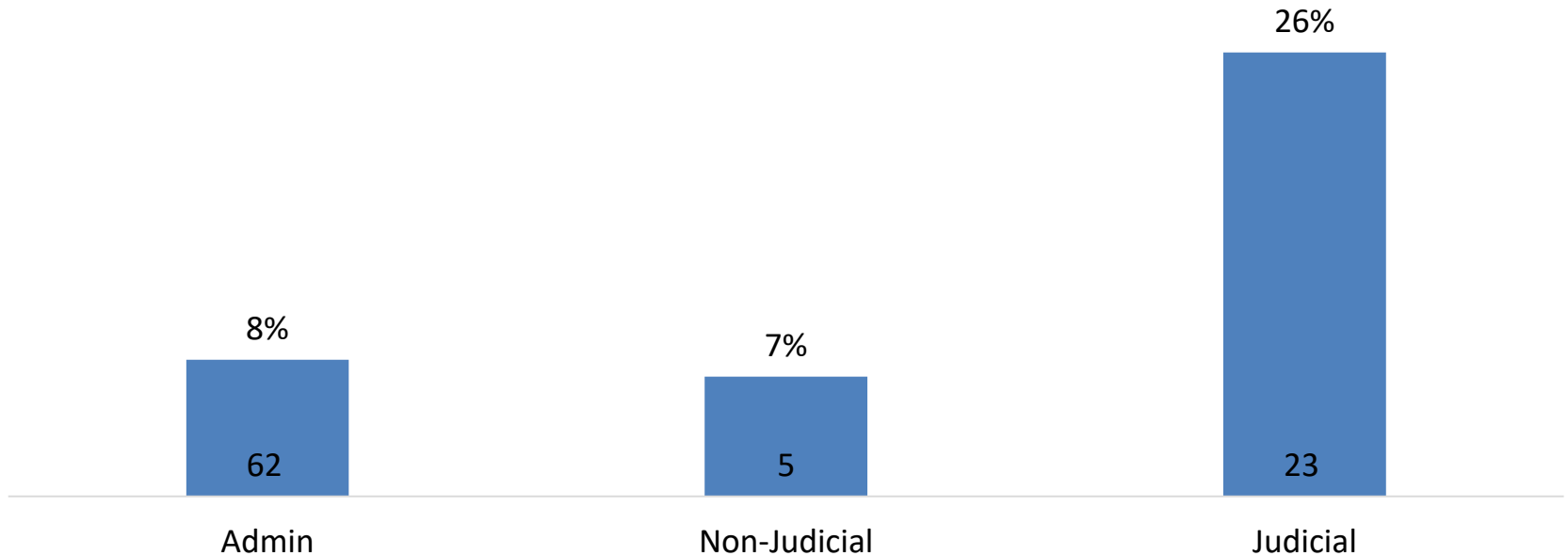


Average Length of Stay on Judicial Supervision, FY2018



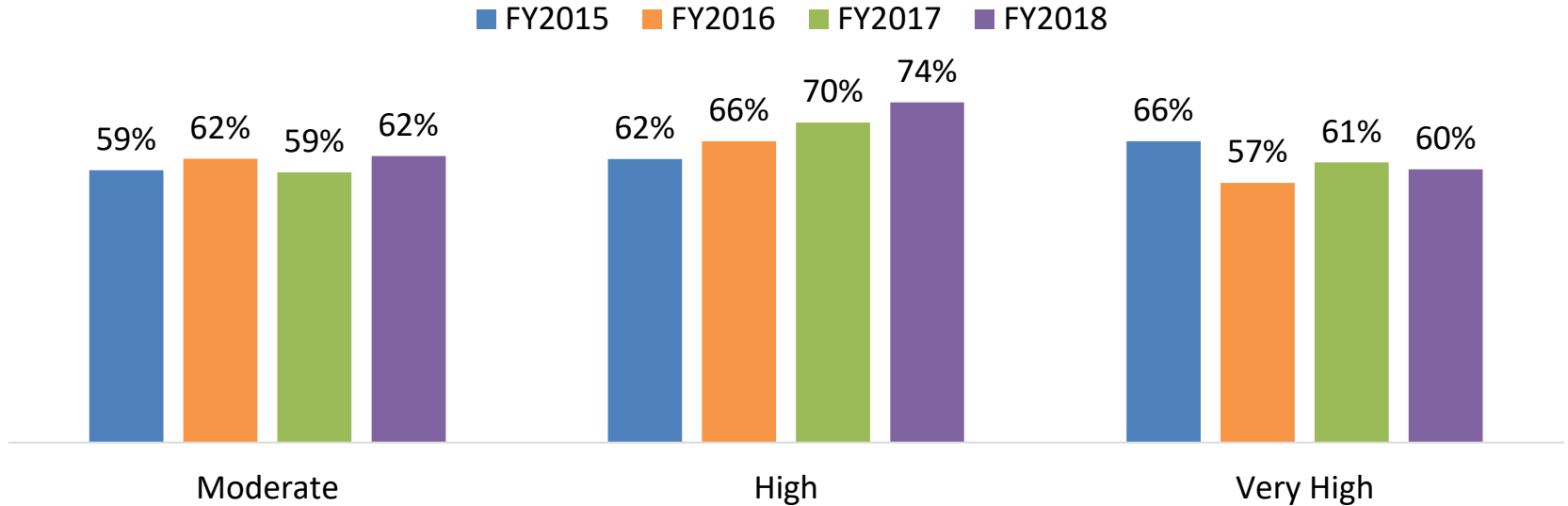
Consistent with research-based practices, most low-risk youth placed on all forms of supervision are not receiving contracted services.

Percentage of Low-Risk Youth Receiving Services by Supervision Type, FY2018



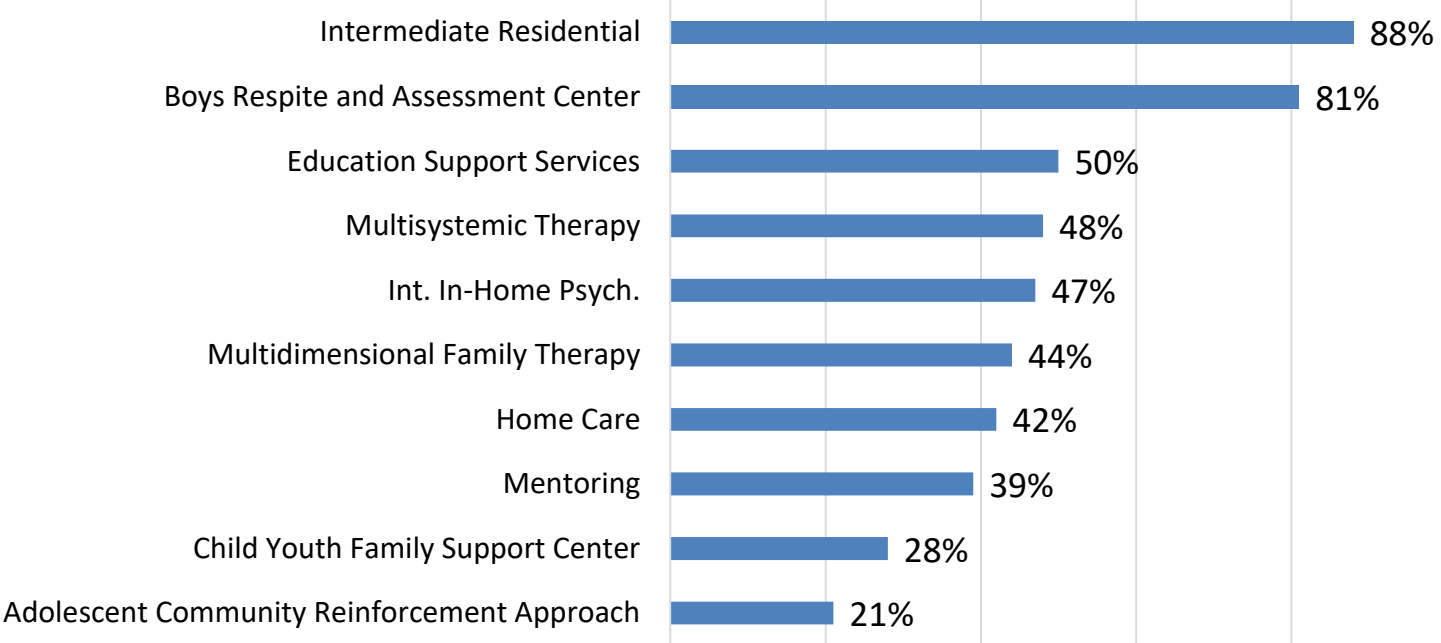
An increasing proportion of high-risk youth are receiving contracted services.

Percentage of Youth on Judicial Supervision Receiving Services by Risk Level, FY2015–FY2018



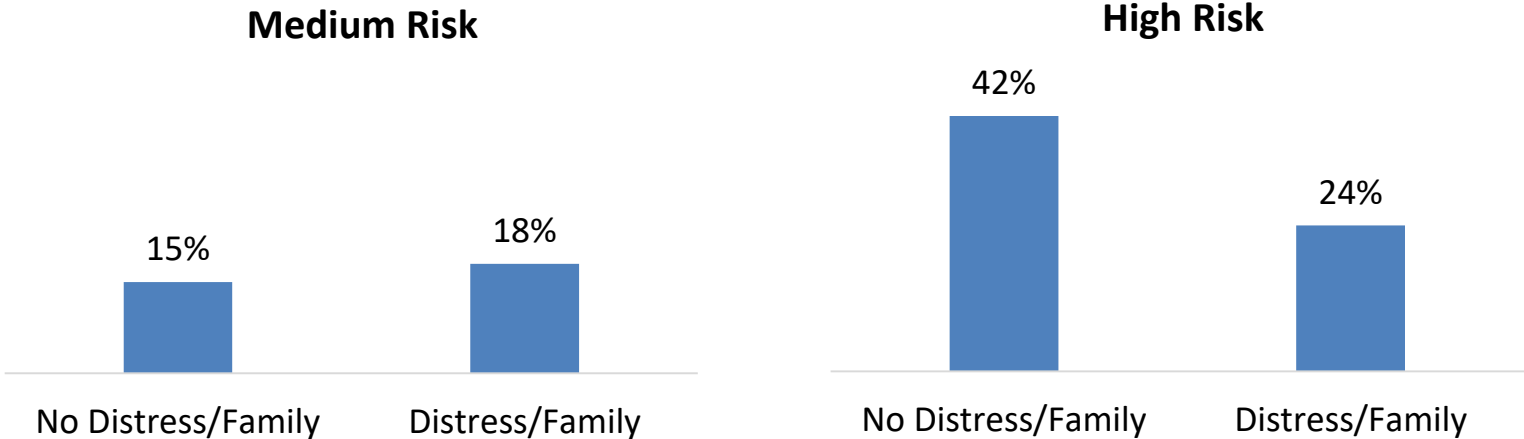
Contracted residential programs serve primarily higher risk youth while community-based contracted programs serve 50 percent or less high/very high risk youth.

Proportion of Population Served Assessed as High- or Very High-Risk Youth by Service Program, FY2018



A low proportion of youth with family-related needs received contracted services matched to these needs, though youth could have received non-contracted services.

Percentage of Medium- and High-Risk Youth Starting Judicial Supervision with a Distress/Family Risk Who Received a Related Community-Based Therapeutic Program, FY2018



Distress/Family Risk indicates distress/family was identified as a primary, secondary, or tertiary risk on the JAG nearest the start of supervision. Community-based therapeutic programs were defined as MST, MDFT, or Intensive In-Home Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services.

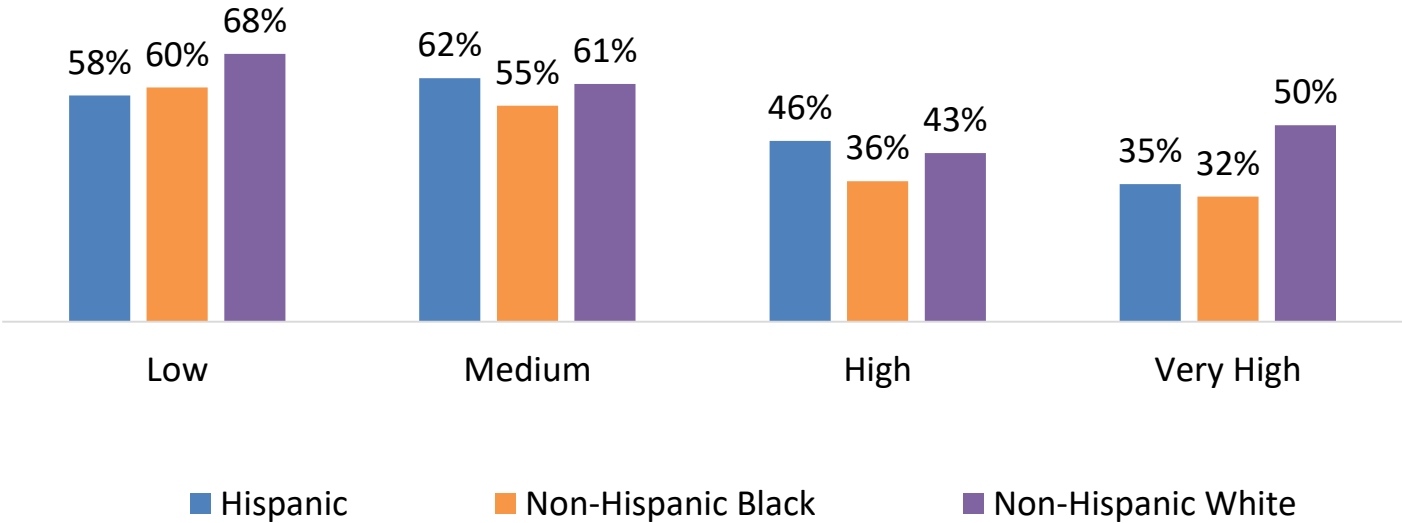
Service completion rates are generally around 50 percent or less.

Service Type	%High/Very High Risk	Completion Rates
	FY2018	FY2018
Intermediate Residential	88%	26%
Boys Respite and Assessment Center	81%	40%
Education Support Services	50%	71%
MST*	48%	53%
Intensive In-Home Psychiatric Services	47%	28%
MDFT*	44%	40%
Home Care	42%	44%
Mentoring	39%	45%
Child Youth Family Support Center*	28%	13%
ACRA	21%	70%

*Top 3 most commonly used program

Service completion rates for non-Hispanic black youth are lower than for white youth across all risk levels.

Completion Rates for Youth Exiting Service by Race/Ethnicity, FY2018



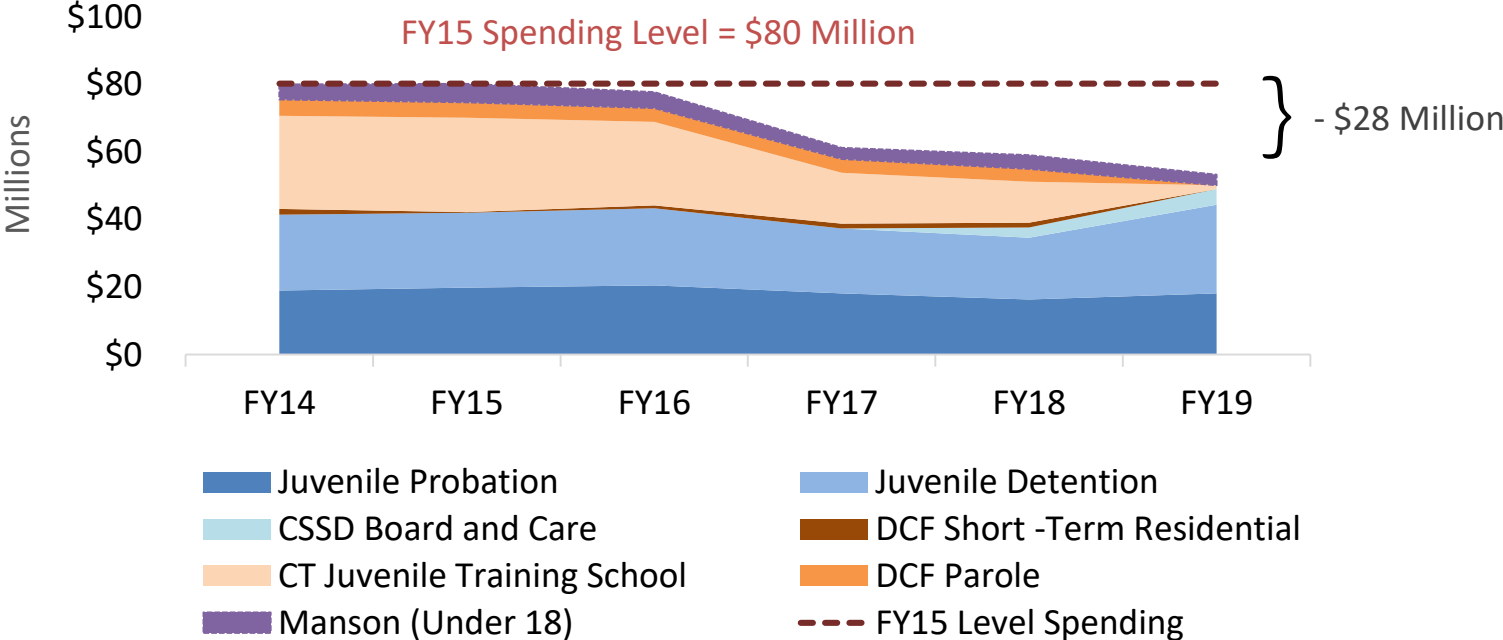
Generally, 50 percent or more of youth who participate in all program types are re-arrested within one year of program exit, particularly youth in residential/in-home therapy services.

Service Type	% High/Very High Risk	Rearrest Rate
	FY2017	FY2017
Boys Respite and Assessment Center	74%	79%
Intermediate Residential	73%	73%
Home Care	63%	67%
Intensive In-Home Psychiatric Services	57%	42%
MDFT	52%	63%
Education Support Services	46%	46%
MST	42%	58%
Mentoring	38%	48%
ACRA	33%	39%
Child Youth Family Support Center	27%	50%

Note: A rearrest indicates a new arrest for a misdemeanor or felony offense within one year of exiting the program.

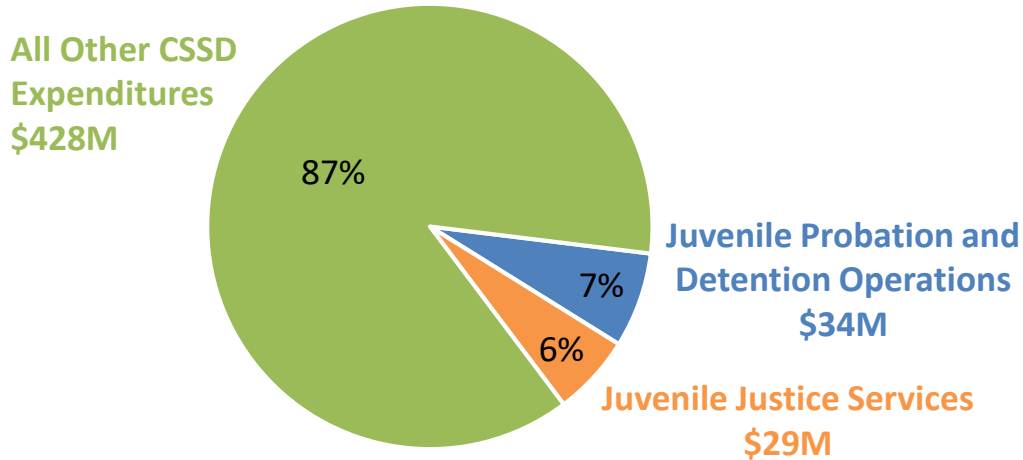
In FY2019, Connecticut spent 35 percent less on juvenile supervision and custody than in FY2015.

Juvenile Justice System Spending on Supervision and Custody, FY2014–FY2019

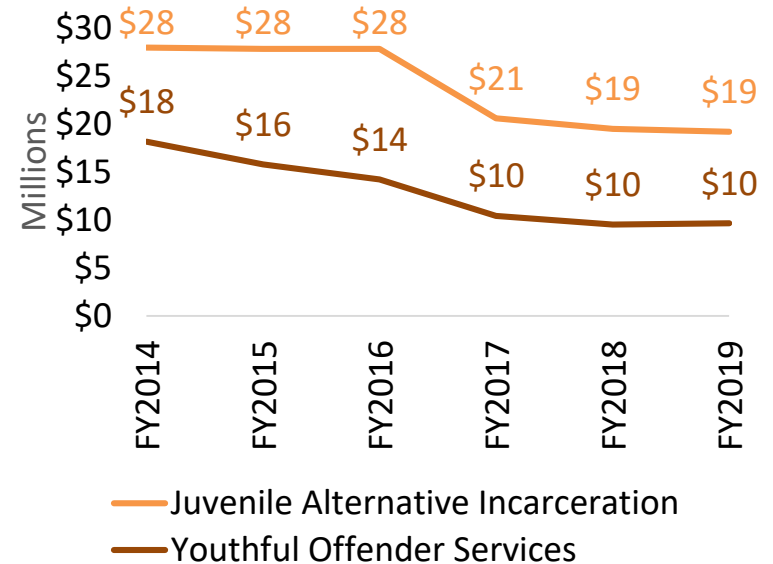


Despite reduced custody costs, CSSD has seen a substantial decline in resources for community services even as the population served becomes higher risk.

CSSD General Fund Expenditures, FY2019



CSSD Juvenile Justice Service Expenditures, FY2014–FY2019



Judicial Supervision and Service Key Takeaways

1 Approximately half of all youth placed on judicial supervision are rearrested within one year of starting supervision.

2 CSSD is increasingly matching youth to supervision and services based on youth's risk of reoffending. Further exploration is needed to determine whether youth are receiving services matched to their needs, and if not, how to improve this process.

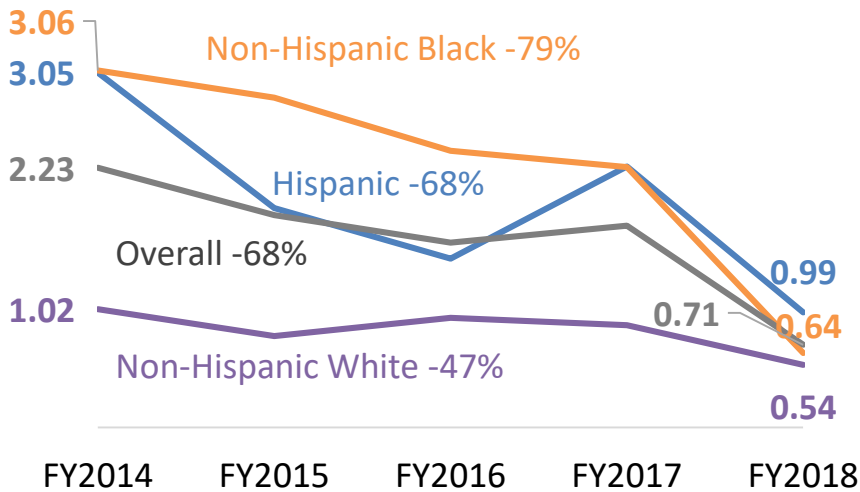
3 Service completion rates are low across all service types, and rearrest rates for youth who participate in services are generally above 50 percent. Further exploration is needed to determine what steps have been taken, and could be taken, including resource enhancements, to strength service engagement and performance.

COMMITMENT ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

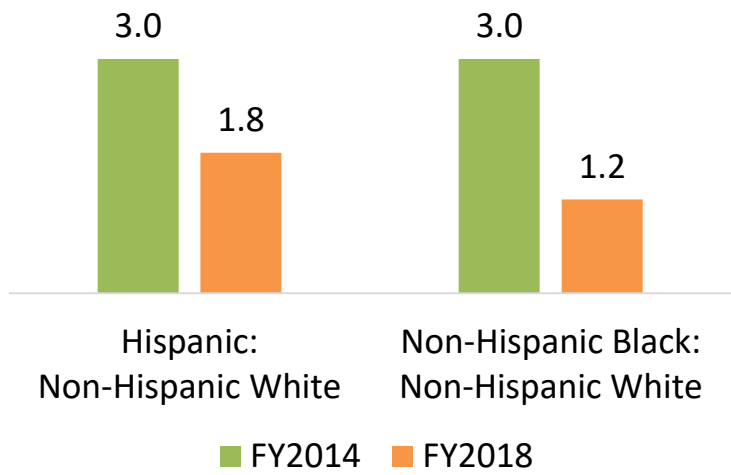
Who are the youth that have historically been committed to state custody, how long are they staying, and what lessons can be learned from their experiences?

Commitment rate disparities declined substantially as commitment rate declined overall between 2014 and 2018.

Commitment Disposition Rate per 100 Referrals by Race/Ethnicity, FY2014–FY2018



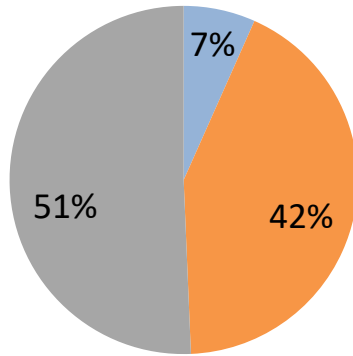
Relative Rate Index, FY2018



In 2018, over half of youth committed to DCF custody were 17 or older, more than three-quarters were youth of color, and 86 percent were high risk.

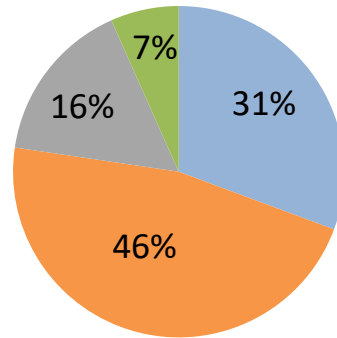
Commitments to DCF, FY2018

Age at Start



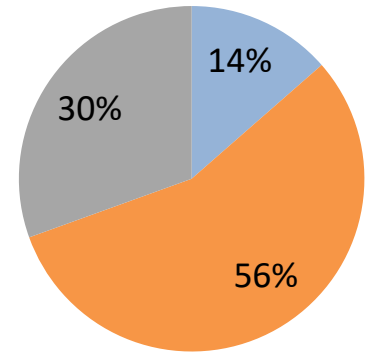
- 14 or Under
- 15 or 16
- 17 or Older

Race/Ethnicity



- Hispanic
- Non-Hispanic Black
- Non-Hispanic White
- Unknown/Unavailable

Risk Level

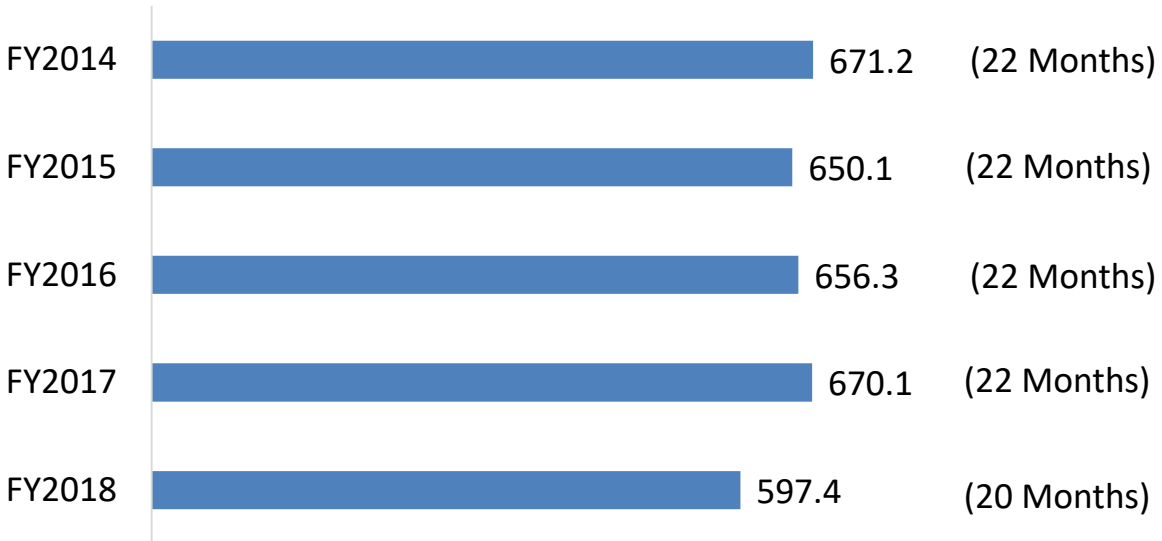


- Moderate
- High
- Very High

Note: Continuous DCF commitments were combined into a single record to represent the entire period a youth was in DCF custody. One commitment may include more than one commitment disposition. No risk level was located for 21 percent of youth starting commitment.

Average lengths of stay in DCF custody have declined over time; youth spent 20 months in DCF custody in 2018.

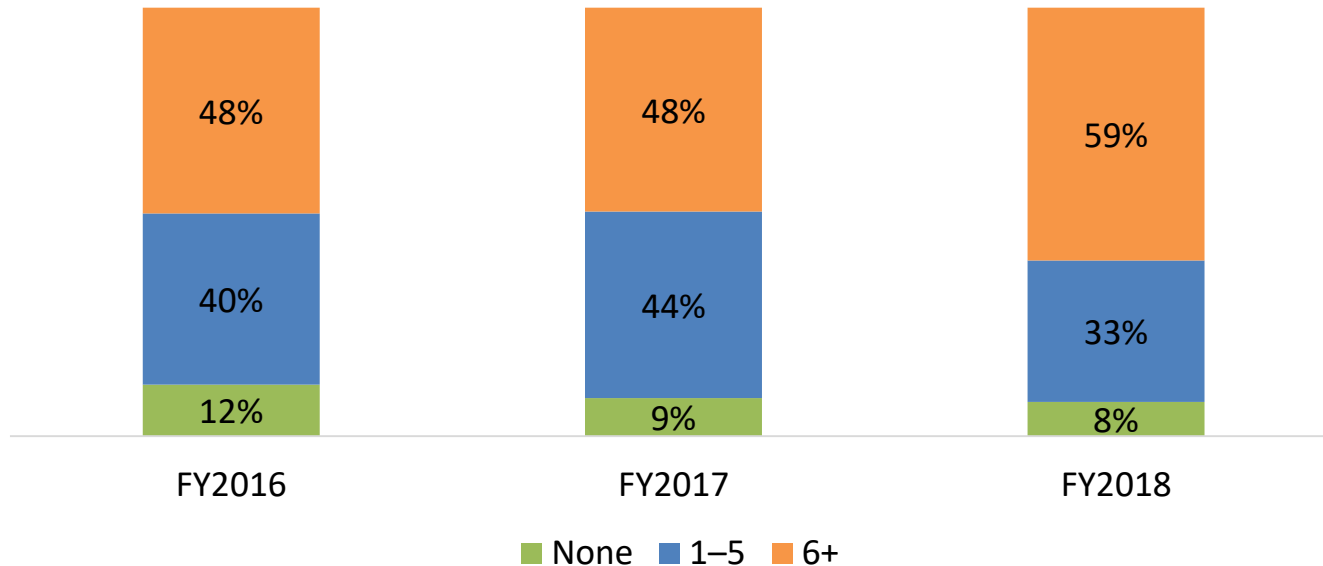
Average Length of Time (Days) Spent Committed to DCF, FY2018



Note: One commitment length of stay may include more than one commitment disposition.

The majority of youth exiting CJTS had at least one disciplinary incident and half had six or more incidents between 2016-2018.

**Number of Disciplinary Incidents Per Youth During CJTS Placement,
FY2016–FY2018**

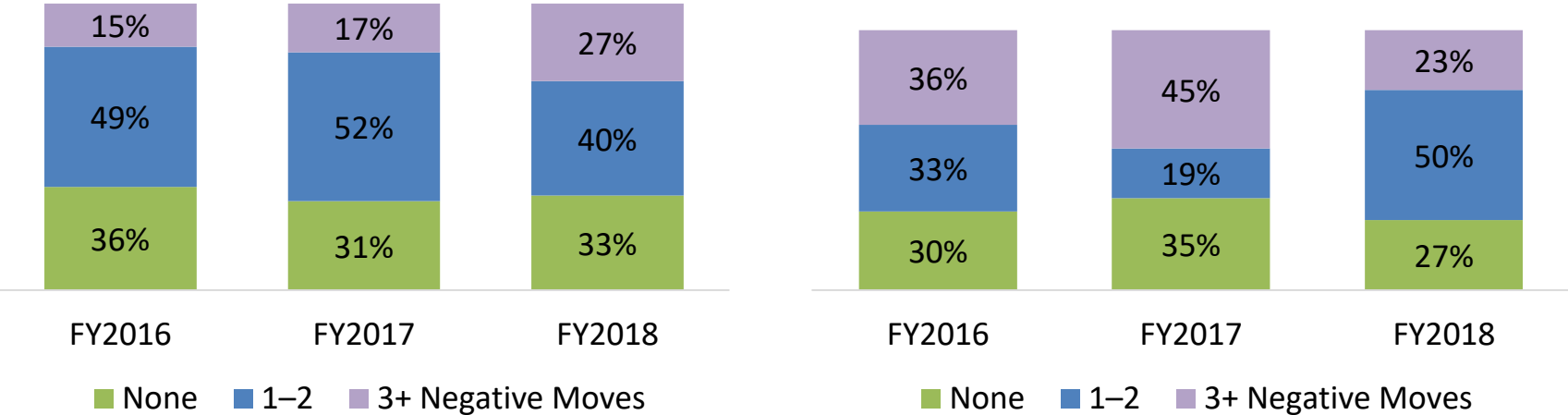


Approximately two-thirds of all youth in CJTS and other placements had one or more negative movements, and a quarter in 2018 had three or more.

Number of Negative Movements Per Youth During Commitment, FY2016–FY2018

Starting at CJTS

Starting Other Placement – Male



Note: A negative movement is defined as moving from a less restrictive to a more restrictive placement.

Qualitative Takeaways on Commitments: REGIONS

The rapid closure of the CJTS and transfer of commitment responsibilities to CSSD has raised questions about whether existing secure placement options in CT are able to offer youth the appropriate supervision and services required to effectively meet their needs.

- Stakeholders expressed concern with the overall viability of the REGIONS programs in Bridgeport and Hartford, specifically the **limited options that the physical structure and space presents for long-term service and treatment** provision given its original purpose as a short-term detention facility.
- Stakeholders identified **limited family engagement, youth with intensive behavioral needs, and a lack of involvement from community providers in programming** as additional concerns with the REGIONS program, though service delivery has been bolstered over time.
- Most youth transitioning from secure REGIONS programs are **placed in a staff secure facility** in the community before returning home.

Commitment Key Takeaways

1

The youth historically committed to state custody and placed in CJTS were older, high risk, spent extended time in custody, and had a substantial number of incidents and negative movements, emphasizing both the challenging nature of the population served as well as the inadequacy of past approaches to managing them.

2

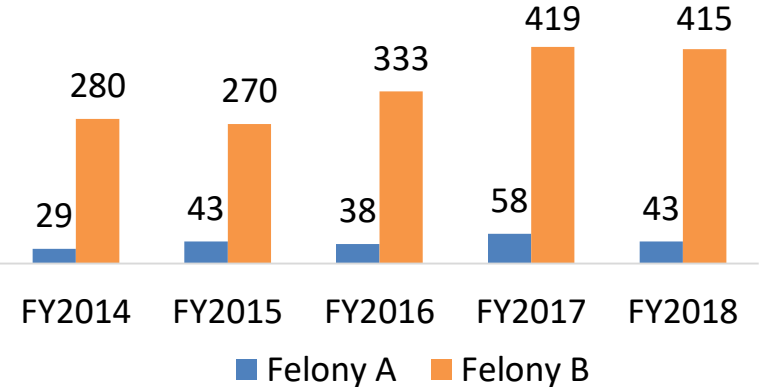
Focus group participants expressed significant concerns with placing youth in REGIONS long term given that the facilities were designed only for short-term stays. Yet, participants struggled to identify viable alternatives for the small group of youth that do require a secure setting.

DOC ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

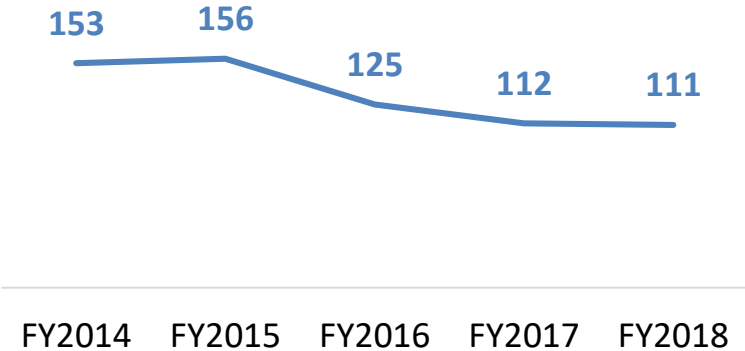
Who is incarcerated in DOC facilities,
why are they there, and how long are
they there?

While felony A and B referrals increased 48 percent since 2014, DOC admissions decreased 27 percent during the same period.

**Felony A and B Juvenile Court Referrals,
FY2014–FY2018**



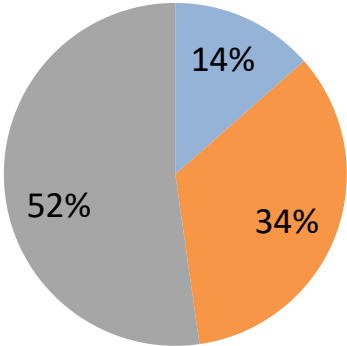
**DOC Admissions of Youth Under 18,
FY2014–FY2018**



Over half of youth under 18 admitted to Manson and York are 17, just over 80 percent are youth of color, and an increasing percentage have behavioral health needs.

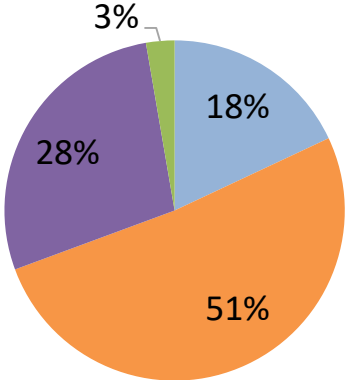
DOC Admissions of Youth Under 18, FY2018

Age at Admission



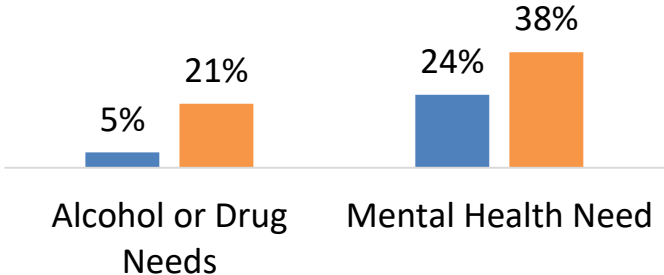
15 16 17

Race/Ethnicity



White Black Hispanic Asian

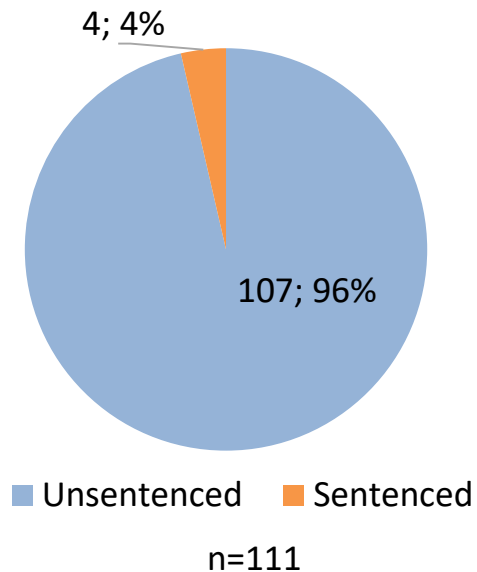
Needs at Admission



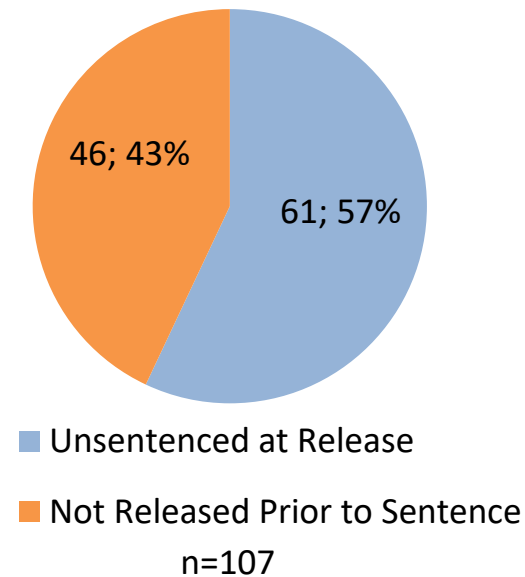
FY2014 FY2018

Nearly all youth under 18 are admitted to Manson and York on pretrial status, and over half are released prior to sentencing.

Legal Status at Admission, FY2018

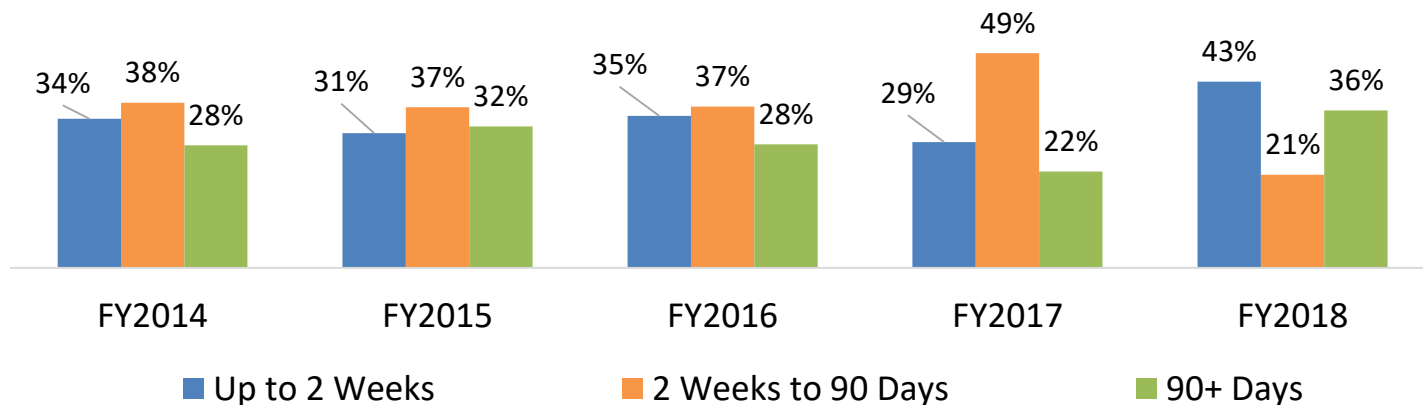


Unsentenced Admissions, FY2018



Two-thirds of youth under 18 in DOC that exit prior to sentencing stay in the facility less than 90 days, and 30–40 percent stay less than 2 weeks.

Lengths of Stay for Youth Under 18 in DOC Custody that Exit Prior to Sentencing, FY2014–FY2018



Qualitative Takeaways on DOC Admissions

- DOC leadership/staff **do not believe that DOC facilities are the most appropriate placements for youth and that youth would better served in a juvenile facility rather than in DOC custody.**
- Training for staff is geared toward an adult corrections audience, and union issues make it more difficult to recruit staff with specialized training in youth development.
- Staff at MYI identified a need for additional counselors and psychiatric supervisors to **better serve youth with more intensive behavioral health issues**, and believe that youth would benefit from additional life skills programs and substance use treatment.
- **Transitional services for youth released from MYI are limited**, particularly for those youth that cannot return home.

DOC Admissions Key Takeaways

1

Most youth are placed in DOC custody pre-sentencing, released prior to sentencing, and stay a short period of time, raising the question of whether such placements were necessary in the first place.

2

Most stakeholders interviewed do not believe that DOC facilities are the most appropriate place for youth, as these facilities need additional staff training and critical services to meet youths' developmental needs.

Next Steps: Recommendation development, consensus building, and implementation

- ❖ CSG Justice Center staff are developing an initial set of policy and practice recommendations based on assessment findings and best practices and are meeting with agency and system leaders to review, vet, and refine these recommendations.
- ❖ Recommendations will be vetted with additional stakeholders/constituencies (prosecutors/defenders, law enforcement, judges, advocates, etc.) in the next few months.
- ❖ Recommendations will then be presented to the full IOYouth task force at the final task force meeting (late July), where a vote will take place on which recommendations will move forward and be translated into specific legislative, administrative, fiscal, and practice changes.
- ❖ Once the recommendations are finalized, CSG Justice Center staff will assist agencies in developing initial implementation plans. A subcommittee of the JJPOC composed primarily of system agencies and led by Rep. Walker and OPM will oversee implementation on an ongoing basis.